

# HISTORY

OF THE

## PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

OF SHIPPENSBURG, PA.,

PRESBYTERY OF CARLISLE:

### A HISTORICAL DISCOURSE,

PREACHED BY THE PASTOR,

REV. W. A. McCARRELL,

JULY 2a, 1876.

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# HISTORICAL DISCOURSE.

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Deut. xxxii, 7:—Remember the days of old, consider the years of many generations ; ask thy father, and he will shew thee ; thy elders, and they will tell thee.

WE have here a divine command to recall the past. God has endowed us with the faculty of memory, and its existence and powers imply that it was intended to be used. The past, with all of its wonderful events, with its rich lessons of wisdom, is not to be forgotten. In the history of all these ages gone, we only see the footsteps of almighty God. All of the events of the past and present, whether great or small, are but the unfolding of the one eternal plan. Individuals are born and die, nations rise and fall, stars and planets move in their courses, in obedience to the command of Him who sees the end from the beginning, and “who doeth all things in accordance with the counsels of His own will.” When this wondrous plan is consummated, then will the end be ; then will these heavens be rolled together as a scroll, and the earth be melted with fervent heat. It is only when we take into consideration these facts, that the true significance of the past is seen. The reason, therefore, God so often called upon the Israelites to remember their past history, was, that in this they might recognize His hand. They were to remember all of the way that *He* had led them. Although to a merely superficial observer it might appear that men only had to do with the shaping of Israelitish history, yet they were plainly given to understand that God was in it all. It was God who brought their forefathers down to Egypt. It was God who in His own time delivered them from their bondage to the Egyptians. It was God who led them through the sea. It was God who led them for forty years through the wilderness. It was God who brought them into the promised land, and firmly established them in its possession. They were to remember the

days of old, they were to consider the years of many generations, because in them all they could trace the finger of God, as it mapped out their history.

We come to-day, with thousands all over this broad land of ours, to call to remembrance the past of our beloved Zion,—this grand old Presbyterian Church of these United States of America. The history which I shall trace to-day is but a small part of that history which will be written by thousands of pens. In 1873, our Assembly, in view of the approaching Centennial of our country, took the following action :

1. That the first Sabbath in July, 1876, be designated as a day of praise and thanksgiving to God for the manifold blessings with which He has crowned us as a people.
2. That the pastor of each church deliver a discourse on that day, if not previously done, on the history of his church.
3. That a collection be taken up that day for building a fire-proof edifice for the Presbyterian Historical Society.

It was most certainly fitting that such action as this should be taken. In these days, when we celebrate our material greatness, when we review our progress as a nation in the arts, sciences, agriculture, machinery; when we consider the vast extent of our territory, stretching from ocean to ocean, and from the lakes to the gulf, all bound together by bands of iron and of steel—our vast mineral resources, our great rivers and lakes affording highways for commerce and intercourse—while we with pride remember these things, shall God and religion be forgotten? Surely not! We are ever to remember that under God we owe what we are as a nation to *religion*—and to that form of religion known as *Protestantism*. He must be a superficial reader of history, indeed, who cannot trace the hand of God in the discovery and settlement of this country. When the Old World was rocked with the earthquake of intolerance and persecution, the New World was opened up as an asylum for the persecuted. Here, men and women who would not submit to the tyranny of priests and kings and parliaments, found a place where they could worship God according to the dictates of their own consciences. They came here, those noble, godly forefathers of ours, from the mountains and moors and glens of Scotland and of Ireland; from “the sunny vales and vine-



clad hills of France ;'' from merry old England, from Germany, Holland, Switzerland—in short, from every land where oppression stamped his iron heel. They came here to enjoy the blessings of freedom and to worship God. And thus the corner-stone of our nation was laid in the principles of the religion of Jesus Christ. God caused the wrath of man to praise Him in the establishment of this nation. Out of seeming evil came forth infinite good. Under God, therefore, this land belongs to Protestantism, for our Protestant forefathers purchased it with their blood and treasure. But while the honor of possessing this land, and holding it for Christ, belongs to Protestantism, it cannot be denied that very much of that honor belongs to that special form of Protestantism known as *Presbyterianism*. Far be it from us to take one jot or one tittle of glory from Protestants of other denominations. They have done much. We honor, we love them for it. The Episcopalians can boast of their Washington. The Baptists may well be proud of their Roger Williams. The Methodists may well glory in their John Wesley. In fact, almost every denomination has its hero or heroes. And yet, after all is granted, it must be conceded that, under God, our nation owes more to Presbyterianism and Presbyterians, than to any other form of government or men.

The first Christian settlers of this country were largely Presbyterians. The Scotch and Scotch-Irish—the French Huguenots, who settled in such numbers in South Carolina, after the revocation of the edict of Nantes—the Dutch of Holland, who settled Manhattan Island—the Puritans of New England—all were Presbyterians, or essentially so. For many years after the settlement of New England, and in many places even to the present day, the churches are known as Congregational or Presbyterian. The Puritans of Old England were, at first undoubtedly largely Presbyterian, and when they came to this country they brought their Presbyterianism with them. Robinson, whose church at Leyden was the mother of the Plymouth Colony, declared that his church was of the same government as the Protestant church of France; and it was undoubtedly Presbyterian. Fourteen years before the landing of the Pilgrim Fathers, Brewster was elected a ruling elder in this church. When, two years afterwards, he was elected an assistant of Robinson, he refused to accept the position, on the ground that

he was only a ruling elder, and had no right to perform the functions of a minister or teaching elder. With these views Brewster landed with the Plymouth colony, in 1620. In 1646 and 1680, a synod composed of one minister and one elder from each of the churches met at Cambridge, Mass., and there distinctly recognized the Presbyterian form of government, and adopted the Westminster Confession of Faith as their symbol of doctrine.

The first Christian settlers of this country were thus not only largely Presbyterians, but Presbyterians were the first to declare that we ought of right to be free and independent. Bancroft says in his history: "We shall find that the first voice publicly raised in America to dissolve all connection with Great Britain, came not from the Puritans of New England, nor the Dutch of New York, nor the planters of Virginia, *but from the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians.*" In May, 1775, or more than thirteen months before the Declaration of Independence, the Presbyterian citizens of Mecklenburg county, N. C., met together and declared themselves free from all allegiance to the mother country. It is true that before this, all over the country, and especially in New England, loud complaints and protests against the tyranny of the British government had been made—the battles of Lexington and Concord had been fought, and the people were in an attitude of defence—but no one had gone so far as to think of separation from the mother country. The people then only thought of reforming abuses and putting down unjust measures. This Mecklenburg declaration was, therefore, the first declaration of independence. And, it is a very significant fact, that the Declaration of Independence passed by Congress, July 4th, 1776, is very similar in many respects to this Mecklenburg declaration. Let me quote a few sentences from this Mecklenburg declaration:

*"Resolved,* That we, the citizens of Mecklenburg county, do hereby dissolve the political bands which have connected us to the mother country, and hereby absolve ourselves from all allegiance to the British Crown, and abjure all political connection, contact or association with that nation, who have wantonly trampled on our rights and liberties, and inhumanly shed the blood of American patriots at Lexington.

*"Resolved,* That we do hereby declare ourselves a free and independent people; are, and of right ought to be, a sovereign and self-



governing association, under the control of no power other than that of *our God*, and the general government of the Congress;—to the maintenance of which independence we solemnly pledge to each other our mutual coöperation, *our lives, our fortunes, and our most sacred honor.*”

Any one can see the similarity between this and our national declaration, not only in ideas, but in words and phrases. It is altogether probable that a copy of this declaration was before the committee which drew up our national declaration, and that, to say the least, Jefferson was greatly aided in his work by it.

Be this as it may, we know that a grand old Presbyterian, Dr. Witherspoon, was one of the staunchest defenders of the declaration as passed; and in all probability, if it had not been for him, it never would have passed. It is well known that the measure met with the greatest opposition in the Provincial Congress. It was opposed by most able and worthy men, not because they lacked in patriotism and devotion to their country, but because they thought that the time had not come for such a radical measure. Witherspoon did more to turn the tide in favor of *immediate* declaration of independence, than any other man, perhaps. Says one, speaking of the debates of those four memorable days which preceded and included the fourth of July, 1776, “When the declaration of independence was under debate, doubts and forebodings were whispered through the hall. The House hesitated, wavered, and for a while liberty and slavery appeared to hang in an even scale. It was then that an aged patriarch arose—a venerable and stately form, his head white with the frost of years. Every eye went to him with the quickness of thought, and remained with the fixedness of the polar star. He cast on the Assembly a look of inexpressible interest and unconquerable determination; while on his visage the hue of age was lost in the flush of burning patriotism that fired his cheek. ‘There is,’ said he, ‘a tide in the affairs of men, a nick of time. We perceive it now before us. To hesitate, is to consent to our own slavery. That noble instrument upon your table, which ensures immortality to its author, should be subscribed this very morning, by every pen in this house. He that will not respond to its accents and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions, is unworthy the name of freeman. For my own part, of property I have some, of reputation more.

That reputation is staked, that property is pledged, on the issue of this contest; and although these gray hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather that they descend thither by the hand of the executioner than desert at this crisis the sacred cause of my country.'''\* Nobler words than these of Witherspoon, were never spoken.

But Presbyterianism has done even more than this. It is a well known fact that our national form of government is almost identical with the form of government of the Presbyterian church; and, as is now admitted, was in all probability largely copied from it. Our form of church government, just as our national government, is a constitutional republic, where the majority of the people rule through their representatives, whom they choose. In both, the smaller parts are subject to the greater, and all the parts to the whole. Presbyterianism and Republicanism are opposed to Prelacy and Monarchy on the one hand, and to Independency on the other. Isaac Taylor calls republicanism, "the Presbyterian principle." Says Bishop Horsely: "Calvin was unquestionably in theory a republican." "So wedded was he to this notion, that he endeavored to fashion the government of all the Protestant churches on republican principles." Mr. Villers, an able writer and historian, says: "It was to Geneva that all of the proscribed exiles who were driven from England by the intolerance of Mary, came to get intoxicated with republicanism; and from this focus they brought back with them those principles of republicanism which annoyed Elizabeth, perplexed and resisted James, and brought Charles to the deserved death of a traitor." Says Macaulay of the Scottish preachers: "They inherited the republican opinions of Knox." King James declared on one occasion that "a Scot's Presbytery agreeth as well with monarchy, as God and the devil." The republican character of Presbyterianism is thus firmly established, by the testimony even of its enemies. And it is a fact of history that our Presbyterian forefathers, through all the dark period of the Revolution, adhered firmly to their principles.

Mr. William B. Reed, of Philadelphia, an Episcopalian, wrote :

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\* For this and some other quotations, I am indebted to a little work of Dr. Breed, of Philadelphia, entitled, "Presbyterians and the Revolution," which I would heartily commend to all Presbyterians in these Centennial times.



“A Presbyterian royalist was a thing unheard of. The debt of gratitude which independent America owes to the dissenting clergy and laity *never can be paid.*” Bancroft says: “The rigid Presbyterians proved in America the supporters of religious freedom. They were true to the spirit of the great English dissenter who hated all laws that were formed

“To stretch the conscience and to bind  
The native freedom of the mind.”

In view of all these facts, it is certainly fitting that we as Presbyterians should review with special interest these years and deeds of the past. We should review them, not merely for the sake of boasting and of glorying, but that we may be incited to nobler and holier lives by the example of our Presbyterian forefathers, and that our hearts may be warmed with true gratitude to that God who has made us what we are, and has given us such a goodly heritage.

As God has blessed us as a nation during the century which is fast closing, so has he blessed us as a church. He has not only made us, as a church, an honored instrument in His hand in shaping the history of our country, but He has been graciously with us as a church. During all these years, the cords of our Presbyterian Zion have been lengthening and her stakes strengthened. When our first General Assembly met in Philadelphia, May 21st, 1789, our church was composed of four Synods and sixteen Presbyteries, to which belonged 188 ministers and 419 churches. At the present time we have 36 Synods, 173 Presbyteries, nearly 5,000 ministers and as many churches, and more than half a million members; and counting the Presbyterian church South, our members and adherents number more than one million. And not only have we thus been prospered numerically, but we have been prospered in like manner spiritually and temporally. Our church has always been a missionary church, and it is still. It contributes more per member, for the extension of the Gospel, than any other church in this country. These are hopeful signs of continued advancement. While it would be pleasant and interesting to trace further the history of our church in this country, it cannot be done in our limited time and space. And my only reason for saying what I have

said, is the desire to make us prize more highly our Presbyterian heritage, and to make us more grateful to God for it. But as the whole is made up of parts, so the whole history of our church is made up of the history of the individual churches composing it. As these individual histories are to be filed away in the Historical Library at Philadelphia, the future historian of the church will have abundance of material from which to gather. Let us then, after this general introduction, looking to God for His blessing, address ourselves to the task before us—The history of the Presbyterian Church of Shippensburg, Pa.

Let me say, however, that this history must be comparatively brief and imperfect, owing to the fact that I have had so few sources from which to gather materials, and, in the midst of my other duties, so little time to devote to it.

#### SHIPPENSBURG.

The first thing that demands a passing notice is the town of Shippensburg. This is said to be the oldest town west of the Susquehanna, York excepted. It was a most important point in the early history of this valley, and especially during the French and Indian wars. It received its name from Edward Shippen, the original proprietor. The first settlers were mostly Irish. Cumberland county was erected in 1750, and it was made the temporary county seat; and when in 1751 the courts were removed to Carlisle, the people of the upper end of the county—now Franklin—remonstrated strongly against the removal. In 1755 two forts were erected here by the government—forts Morris and Franklin. These were much needed for the protection of the settlers. Those were “times that tried men’s souls.” After Braddock’s defeat, July 9th, 1755, this whole region, for a period of eight or ten years, was swept with fire and sword. Men, women and children were scalped and murdered indiscriminately. Whole families were destroyed, none being left to tell the sad tale. Houses and barns were burned and crops destroyed, and the whole country laid waste. This immediate vicinity witnessed scenes of thrilling interest. James Burd, in a letter to Mr. Shippen, who was then at Lancaster, dated Shippensburg, Nov. 2d, 1755, says: “We are in great confusion here at present. We have received express last night that the In-



dians and French are in a large body in the Cove, a little way from Williams Maxwell, Esq., and that they immediately intend *to fall down upon this county*. We, for these two days past, have been working at our fort here, and believe shall work this day (Sunday). This town is full of people, they being all moving in with their families—five or six families in a house. We are in great want of arms and ammunition; but with what we have we are determined to give the enemy as warm a reception as we can. Some of our people have been taken prisoners by this party, and have made their escape from them and came in to us this morning. \* \* \* We have one hundred men working at Fort Morris with heart and hand every day.” Rupp’s History of Cumberland county, page 92. He says in another place, “Many of the frontier settlers, in their flight for life from the Indians, took refuge here. In July, 1763, there were here 1,384 of those poor, distressed inhabitants. Of these, 301 were male adults, 345 women, and 738 children; many of whom were obliged to live in stables, barns, cellars, and under old, leaky sheds; the dwelling houses being all crowded. The inhabitants were kept in constant alarm for eight or ten years, not knowing at what moment they would be surprised by a blood-thirsty enemy.” Some idea of this place at that time, a century and a quarter ago nearly, may be formed from the following extracts from a letter of Chas. Swain to Governor Morris, dated Shippensburg, June 14th, 1755: “I arrived at this place on Monday, and judge there are sufficient buildings for storing the provisions without erecting any. I find not above two pastures here; those but mean as to grass, for drought; but there is a fine range of forage for upwards of four miles in the woods, quite to the foot of the South Mountain; also a good run of water, that the cattle will be continually improving after they come here.” It is probable that this town was founded about the year 1730 or 1733.\* It was incorporated Jan. 21st, 1819.

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\* Since writing the above, I have learned the following facts through the kindness of Mr. Jno. McCurdy, Esq., of this place. The first settlement was made here in June, 1730, by twelve men, probably with their families. The following are the names of eight of these pioneers:—Richard Morrow, John Culbertson, Alex. Caskey, Alex. Steen, John McCall, Hugh Rippey, John Rippey and John Strain. These names should be held in everlasting remembrance by us, for those who bore them were not only the first white settlers of this place, but they were



The population in 1810 was 1,159 ; in 1820, 1,410 ; in 1840, 1,473 ; at the present time, about 2,600.

#### ORIGIN OF PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

We come now to notice the origin of our church in this place. There were doubtless Presbyterians here from the first settlement of the town. Owing, however, to the fact that the Episcopalian element rather predominated in the early settlement of the place, through the influence of Mr. Shippen, who was an Episcopalian, and the nearness of an organization at Middle Spring, a Presbyterian church was not established here for quite a number of years.

One of the earliest organizations here was the Associate Reformed Church, which, in the course of time, became the Presbyterian church. This may properly be considered, therefore, the origin of our church.

One writing on this very point, in the year 1839, says: "The union effected between the divided bodies of the Associate Church of Scotland, called Burgers and Anti-Burgers, and the Covenanters in this country, resulted in the denomination called Associate Reformed. And the union effected between this latter body and the Presbyterian church merged in and assumed the name of the Presbyterian church alone."

Sometime between October, 1821, and August, 1822, during the ministry of the Rev. Mr. Strong, a union was effected between the

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staunch Presbyterians. In a letter written from this place by James McGraw, to his brother John, at Paxton, dated May 21st, 1733, he says there were then eighteen (18) cabins in the town. They had no name for the place at that time, he tells us. The day before he wrote, Mary Rippey, the daughter of Hugh, was buried. This was the first white person ever buried here, May 20th, 1733. She lies in the graveyard just across the street. They selected a place for her grave, Mr. McGraw tells us, "on a piece of rising ground just north of the path." He also says of her, in his quaint, Irish way, "She was a very '*purty gerl*.'" He says, "that she died of a '*faver*.'" She was soon to have been married to a young man "from below." And thus in the very beginning of the history of our town, death was at his cherished work of blighting human hopes. Mary and her lover have long since met, as we trust, in the better world.

Mr. Shippen made the purchase of the ground on which the town stands in 1737.

It is an interesting, though sad piece of history, that the daughter of Mr. Shippen was the wife of *Benedict Arnold*.

Presbyterians residing in and about this place, and the members of the Associate Reformed church. There were several causes leading to this union.

1. In May, 1822, a union was consummated between the General Synod of the Associate Reformed church and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian church. By this union the funds of the Synod were transferred to the treasury of the Assembly, and the theological seminaries were consolidated. The Synod at that time was composed of five presbyteries and thirty-two ministers, a large majority of whom consented to the union; some, however, dissented and remained as they were. Minutes of Ass., 1821-2-3. This being the case, it was natural that the members of the two churches here should seek a union; especially when we consider,

2. That there was little or no difference between the two churches. Both held to the same doctrinal standards, both had the same form of government, and both used the Psalms of David in worship. In fact, Rouse's version of the Psalms was used till a comparatively recent date.

3. At that time the Associate Reformed church was very weak and was not able to support a pastor itself, Mr. Strong's labor being divided between this and the Associate Reformed church of Chambersburg; and it was more convenient, and in some instances necessary, for the Presbyterians in and near town to attend church here.

So a union was formed, and the "Old White Church," as it is called, enlarged and repaired. By the terms of this union, a minister could be called from either the Presbyterian or Associate Reformed church. The church itself remained in connection with the 2d Presbytery of Philadelphia, belonging to the Associate Reformed Synod, until April, 1825, when, by the advice of the 2d Presbytery of Philadelphia, its connection was transferred to the Presbytery of Carlisle. From the time of this union there has been a regular succession of ministers and elders and members, thus making the united church one and the same organization, just as certainly as the blended waters of the Monongahela and Allegheny form the one Ohio river, or as the united Old and New School Churches form the one Presbyterian church of the United States of America.



The exact date of the organization of the Associate Reformed branch of this church is not known. The lot, number 216, on which the old White Church stands, was deeded by the Shippen brothers, June 2d, 1794. We are told that an organization existed years before this, the congregation being supplied for a time by a Mr. Jamison. It is altogether probable, therefore, that the church was organized not later than 1790, perhaps as early as 1788. Our church, therefore, is not far from a century old. Although thus crowned with the snows of nearly a century, it is a matter of gratitude to God that we are still endowed with the dew of youth, and that we, the children and descendants of our fathers and mothers who are gone, are now in their places carrying on the work which they began, fighting the battles of their Lord and ours. Well may we say, therefore,

“Our fathers’ God! from out whose hand  
The centuries fall like grains of sand,  
We thank Thee for the era done,  
And trust Thee for the opening one.”

My prayer is, that when our children stand, a century hence, where we stand to-day, they may be able to look back with pride upon the work which we have done and the record which we have left, even as we look back upon the work and record of our fathers! The grandest memorial which we can leave behind us, is the memorial of true and godly lives. Then will our children and childrens’ children rise up and call us blessed.

There is a rather singular coincidence in the early history of this church, when compared with the present. The names of the first five persons received into the church on profession of faith in Christ are as follows: William Means, Temperance Means, John Means, Mary Means, and Mary McCarrell; the names of your present pastor and wife, before her marriage. These persons were received into the church in May, 1801. The following are the names of the first Presbyterians recorded as having been received into the church: William Snodgrass and his wife, Jane M. Snodgrass, from the church of Middle Spring, December 3d, 1821; Mr. William Arrell, from the church of Rocky Spring, June 2d, 1822; Mr. William Russell, his wife Elizabeth, and daughter Mary, from the Presbyterian church of Raphoe, Donegal county, Ireland,



July 14th, 1822. At the same time Eliza Russell was received on confession of faith in Christ. Subsequently, May, 1823, there was quite a large accession from the church of Middle Spring: the Hendersons, the McGinnises, the Stewarts, the Pomeroyes, the Duncans, the Leepers, the McKees, the Peebles, the Rippeys, the McKinneys, the Nevins, the Sturgeons, the Mahons, and perhaps others. About the same time, others were received from other churches—Rocky Spring, Big Spring, etc.

The church was chartered, June 9th, 1835, by the name and style of the "Presbyterian Church in the borough of Shippensburg and county of Cumberland."

The first trustees of the church were, Stephen Culbertson, Samuel Sturgeon, Jacob Stough, Alexander P. Kelso, James Griffin, Robert Stewart, John Johnson (of Geo.), Hugh Craig, and Johnson Williamson. The following persons were elected the first officers of the board of trustees, July 30th, 1835: President, Hugh Craig; Secretary, John Johnson; Treasurer, Stephen Culbertson.

Many other very interesting items might be mentioned, but time forbids.

#### PASTORS.

We come now to notice the pastors and pastorates of the church. Our mention of some of these must be very brief, as we have had few materials to gather from.

During its history, the church has had six pastors.

The first pastor of the church was the Rev. James Walker. We have been able to learn but little of him or of his pastorate. He came here directly from Ireland. So far as I can learn, this was his first charge in this country. I have not been able to learn the exact date of his installation here. The Old White Church was built about the year 1797, and we are told that Mr. Walker was called and settled here very soon after this. It is probable, therefore, that he was installed about the year 1798. He resigned in August, 1820; his pastorate, therefore, continued over a period of about twenty-two years. Mr. Walker was a large, heavy-set man, said to be rather pompous in his bearing, although not so in reality. He always carried a cane, and never preached without gloves. This, however, did not interfere with his preaching; for, as he would say, he "handled the truth without gloves," and hence was a good

preacher. During his residence here he lived in the house now occupied by Mrs. Davidson, on East Main street. After leaving this, he went to Ohio, where he died. We know nothing of the results of his ministry here; these are known to God alone, and will be revealed at the last great day.

The second pastor of the church was the Rev. Thomas M. Strong. Mr. Strong was ordained and installed Oct. 23d, 1821, and resigned August, 1822, not being pastor quite a year. The causes leading to this were as follows: Mr. Strong had charge of this church and of the church in Chambersburg. After he had been here for a short time, both of the churches made efforts to secure his labors all of the time. Doubtless fearing that if he should accept either of these calls it would lead to jealousy and rivalry, he refused both and left. He came here from Flat Bush, N. Y., and after his resignation he returned to his old home. Nothing is known of his early or subsequent history. He has been described to me as a tall man, rather slender, and exceedingly fine-looking. He is said to have been a good preacher, his popularity being evidence of this. But little is known of the results of his ministry here. There was a large increase in the membership of the church, however, it being during his ministry that the Presbyterians and Associate Reformed united. The increased strength of the church is seen in the fact that they felt able to support a minister all of the time, and *did* after this. Mr. Strong died in New York some years after leaving this place.

The third pastor of the church was the Rev. Henry R. Wilson, afterwards, Doctor Wilson.

After Mr. Strong left, the church was vacant for some time—more than a year. During this interval it was supplied part of the time by the celebrated Dr. James, of Albany, N. Y. Some time in 1823, Mr. Wilson, who was then pastor of the Presbyterian church of Silvers' Spring, near Carlisle, was called to the pastorate of this church. He accepted the call, and was installed Feb. 18th, 1824. He retired Oct. 2d, 1839, having been pastor of the church for more than fifteen years. Dr. Wilson was one of the prominent men of our church. He was no ordinary man or preacher. During his life he held various positions of trust and of honor in the church. His ministry here was an earnest one, and was marked



with great spiritual results. He labored in season and out of season; he preached Christ and salvation through faith in His name, and in consequence many were added to the church of such as should be saved. It is almost inspiring to read over the list of admissions during Dr. Wilson's ministry here. During his pastorate three hundred and thirty-two (332) were added to the church on profession of faith in Christ; an average of more than twenty a year. His ministry here seemed to be one Pentecostal season after another. The scenes of the past winter were nothing new in the history of this church. Scarcely a communion passed without additions to the church by profession. The highest number received on profession of faith at one time was thirty-nine. This was Oct. 2d, 1831. Shortly after this, Feb. 11th, 1832, nineteen more were received. Frequently, ten, fifteen, and sometimes as high as twenty, were received on examination.

As a sermonizer, Dr. Wilson was not perhaps as great as some, *i. e.*, if his sermons were to be viewed from an intellectual and a literary stand-point. He always preached extemporaneously, and generally made his preparation for Sabbath on Saturday. A brother minister, now living, once asked him how he could do this. "O," said he, "if I spent as much time as some of you brethren in choosing my words, pruning my sentences and rounding my periods, I could not do it." While, therefore, his sermons might not have stood the test of literary and logical criticism, yet they were honored of God, and His approval is infinitely better than the approval of man. He proclaimed the truth—God's truth. He felt that he was only an ambassador for Christ, whose commission was, "Go preach the preaching which I bid thee." He felt that it was not his to *make* the message, as so many seem to think at the present time, but to *deliver* the message already made. He preached *at* the people, not *over* them. He preached *from* the heart and *to* the heart. I have been told that often, as he preached, he would stand with his eyes closed, the tears streaming down over his cheeks, as he plead with sinners to be reconciled to God: and his pleadings were not in vain. May we not learn from his example, that God loves the plain, simple and practical presentation of His truth, more than he loves logic, or rhetoric, or the wisdom of man? "Is not my word like as a fire, saith the Lord; and like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?" Jer. xxiii., 29.



In 1838, Dr. Wilson was elected the first General Agent of the Board of Publication; and after he resigned here, he went to Philadelphia to take charge of that important post. His son, the Rev. H. R. Wilson, Jr., D. D., is now the honorable Secretary of our Board of Church Election. The mantle of the father has fallen on the son. In 1842, Dr. Wilson resigned his position in the Board, and took charge of the church of Neshaminy, at Hartsville, Bucks county, Pa. Here he continued to labor till the month of October, 1848, when, on account of impaired health, he was compelled to resign. He was a great sufferer during the last year or two of his life. Yet, so great was his desire to preach, that often he was carried from his bed into the pulpit, where, seated in a chair he delivered his message, "with his usual clearness of mind and earnestness of manner." He died in Philadelphia, March 22d, 1849, in the sixty-ninth year of his age. He sweetly fell asleep in Jesus, and rested from his labors.

The fourth pastor of the church was the Rev. James Harper, afterwards Doctor Harper. As this was the longest pastorate in the history of the church, so I believe, everything taken into consideration, it was the most fruitful of good. After the large ingatherings in the time of Dr. Wilson, that which was needed most was solid instruction in the great doctrines and principles of religion, that "the man of God might be thoroughly furnished unto all good works." After Dr. Wilson left, it was naturally to be expected that the work of the succeeding pastor, for a time at least, would largely be a work of edification. Dr. Harper was exactly suited for the place and the work. Under God, this congregation owes very much of its stability and soundness in the faith and love for the truth, to this beloved man. As a faithful shepherd, he led the flock committed to him beside the still waters and into the green pastures of the Word. Dr. Harper was installed as pastor of this church on the 8th of May, 1840. On account of age and infirmity he retired on the 13th of April, 1870, his pastorate thus continuing over a period of very nearly thirty years. He was a native of Scotland, having been born in Glasgow, on the 28th of July, 1802. After five years of preparatory study he entered the University of Glasgow, in October, 1820. Having graduated there, he studied divinity under the celebrated Dr. Dick, and was licensed by the

United Secession Presbytery. After laboring for three years as a missionary in his native city, he came to this country, landing in New York in June, 1833. Soon after this he was called to the Presbyterian Church of Galway, N. Y., where he labored most acceptably for five years. After leaving this, at the solicitation of Dr. R. J. Breckenridge, he went to Ellicott's Mills, Md., where he succeeded in organizing a church. From this place he was called to Shippenburg. Here he spent the greater part of his ministerial life; here he did his great work for the Master; here he lived among us after he had laid aside the cares of the pastoral office; here he died, and he sleeps on yonder hill-top among his kindred and people, so many of whom he had laid away in the silent rest of the tomb.

It has been so recently since this beloved man of God passed away, and his life and character have been so well portrayed by another, that I feel that it is not necessary for me to add more. As a man, although truly learned and fully able to fill any pulpit in the land, he was as humble and unassuming as a little child. He did not think of himself more highly than he ought to think. His natural graces were heightened and beautified by the transforming influence of a consistent, christian life. He was a type of the highest style of manhood—a *christian gentleman*. As a preacher, "he was clear, logical, concise, and his sermons were always freighted with truth"—the truth of God's word. He felt that he was only the mouth-piece of Jehovah. He knew nothing but Jesus. I have been told that the great and precious doctrine of Justification through faith in Christ, was a theme, above all others, on which he loved to dwell. But why add more? You know him better than I; and as I speak to you to-day, I doubt not but that the words which he spoke, in the years that are gone, come back with double power to many a heart and conscience. I have been unable to learn the number added to the church during his ministry; we know that it was large, and that several precious seasons of revival marked his pastorate. The results of his labors can never be learned here. The seed which he sowed will doubtless continue to bear fruit till the last day, when many, *many* souls will arise to call him blessed. During all of his ministry here, he was greatly aided and cheered and sustained by his devoted wife, who, as an aged pilgrim, still sojourns with us. He was greatly aided



and cheered in his work, also, by the sympathy and devotion of this people ; and in his last years he often spoke of their kindness to him.

This beloved servant of God, after a brief illness, fell asleep in Jesus, on the 13th of May, 1876. He needs no monument of brass or of marble to perpetuate his memory, for it is engraved upon the tablets of human hearts, and his name is written in Heaven.

The fifth pastor of this church was the Rev. W. W. Taylor, formerly of Philadelphia. I have learned but little of brother Taylor, or his ministry here. He was installed as pastor in June, 1872. The pastoral relation was dissolved, at his own request, June 10th, 1874. Mr. Taylor's ministry here, so far as I can learn, was an earnest and active one. During the whole of his ministry here, the public services of the sanctuary were well attended. During his ministry, thirty-eight were added to the membership of the church ; of these fourteen were added on profession of faith in Christ. As a man and as a preacher, I hear him spoken very highly of by many.

After leaving here he returned to Philadelphia, where he remained for about a year. He was then called to the church of Delaware City, Delaware, where he is at present.

Your present pastor is the sixth pastor of the church. His pastoral relation was formed on the 11th of May, 1875.

Since that time the Lord has been graciously near us as pastor and people, and we come here to-day to review the past with grateful hearts, and to praise Almighty God for what He has done.

#### ELDERS.

During its existence, the church has had twenty-two ruling elders. The following is a list of their names, with the dates of their ordination and installation, so far as known :

John Means, ordained and installed, May, 1805 ; died, September 1st, 1823.

William Bard, ordained and installed, May, 1805 ; resigned, 1823 ; reelected and installed, January 2d, 1825 ; died, 1826.

James Means, probably ordained in 1805 ; removed and afterwards returned, when his name was again added to the roll of the session, November 19th, 1821.



George McGinnis, formerly an elder in Middle Spring, installed, April 11th, 1824; died, August 6th, 1853.

John Reside, ordained and installed, April 11th, 1824; died, April 26th, 1855.

Daniel Henderson, formerly an elder in Middle Spring, installed, January 2d, 1825; died, September 26th, 1852.

Benjamin Reynolds, formerly an elder in Middle Spring, installed, January 2d, 1825; died, January 27th, 1849.

William Rodgers, installed, August 1st, 1835; died, March 24th, 1849.

Stephen Culbertson, ordained and installed, August 1st, 1835.

Robert Stewart, ordained and installed, August 1, 1835; dismissed, August 19th, 1846.

Alexander P. Kelso, ordained and installed, October 4th, 1845; died, March 19th, 1853.

Abraham Smith, installed, October 4th, 1845; died, January 20th, 1848.

Dr. William Rankin, ordained and installed, February 6th, 1848; died, July, 1872.

Robert Mateer, ordained and installed, February 6th, 1848.

Benjamin Snodgrass, ordained and installed, September 7th, 1851; died?—

John Mateer, ordained and installed, September 7th, 1851.

John Bridges, ordained and installed, September 7th, 1851.

Philip Koontz, ordained and installed, January 19th, 1862.

John A. Craig, ordained and installed, January 19th, 1862.

Robert L. Sibbit, ordained and installed, January 19th, 1862.

Robert C. Hays, M. D., ordained and installed, January 19th, 1862.

Charles A. Howland, M. D., ordained and installed, January 19th, 1862.

This is no ordinary list of names. Many of those who are gone, were indeed *pillars* in the house of God. They ruled well and in the fear of the Lord. They were Aarons and Hurs, holding up the hands of their pastors. Dr. Harper often spoke in the highest terms of the men composing the session when he came here: Mr. McGinnis, Mr. Reside, Mr. Henderson, Mr. Reynolds, Mr. Rodgers, Mr. Culbertson, and Mr. Stewart. "They were good men, full of faith and the Holy Ghost."

They have all gone to their reward, and other worthy men stand in their places to-day. The mantle of the fathers has fallen on the sons. The oldest acting member of the session at the present time, is the venerable and beloved Robert Mateer, who has been an elder in this church for more than twenty-eight years. Those who started with him have fallen by the way. May he be long spared with us!

#### DEACONS.

The office of deacon has not been in use in this church since 1840. It was introduced in December, 1821, thus continuing for nearly twenty years. The following is a list of the deacons, in the order of their installation:—Marshal Means, Andrew Thompson, William Snodgrass, ordained, June 27th, 1822; John McClay, Stephen Culbertson, Samuel Sturgeon, Denny Rodgers, George R. Leeper, ordained and installed, June 6th, 1824; James Griffin, Dr. Alexander Stewart, John Raum, Jacob Stough, and Isaac Grier, ordained and installed, March 1st, 1829.

When the office was introduced, we find the following sessional record in reference to the duties of the deacons:

*“Resolved,* That when ordained, the Deacons have committed to their charge all the temporalities of the church, and that they specially be required to attend to the collection of the salary and to have it punctually paid over to the pastor; and that the session will, at least at every sacramental meeting, make enquiry of the Deacons whether they have in this respect performed their duty.”

It will be seen from this, that these good fathers of ours were determined that their pastor should not starve, when they thus appointed a board of deacons to look specially after his interests.

#### MEMBERS.

It cannot be determined exactly how many persons have been members of this church from its organization to the present time. I can discover no continuous roll since 1861. Up to that time—May 4th, 1861—876 persons had been received into the membership of the church on examination and by letter. There are at present 320 members. It is safe to conclude, therefore, that during its history the church has had from twelve to fourteen hundred members. Counting members and adherents, it is safe to con-



clude that more than 3000 souls have been brought within the sphere of its direct influence. What a moulding power this church has been, therefore, during all of these years! Its sons and its daughters have gone forth to the ends of the earth, bearing the impress of divine truth received in this sacred place. Character has been moulded for service on earth, and for the enjoyment of those pleasures which are at God's right hand. It is a noble band, of which we may well be proud. Many of them have crossed the flood and have entered into rest; we are following after.

#### MINISTERS.

Some idea of the influence which this church has exercised, may be gained from the number of ministers it has sent out. Through them, this church has preached Jesus to hundreds of thousands of souls! The planting of this vine has produced fruit which excels in number and richness the clusters upon the vines of Eschol.

It had been my purpose to give a brief notice of each of the ministers this church has sent out, but time and space utterly forbid it. As nearly as I can learn, *seventeen* ministers have gone out from this church. The following are their names, given, as nearly as possible, in the order of their licensure and ordination: Rev. Joseph McCarrell, D. D., licensed June 21st, 1821; Rev. Joseph Mahon, licensed May, 1831, ordained, 1836; Rev. Henry R. Wilson, Jr., D. D., licensed Oct. 4th, 1832, ordained Oct. 16th, 1832; Rev. David D. Clark, licensed April 12th, 1837, ordained April 12th, 1838; Rev. Wm. Carlisle; Rev. Alfred Nevin, D. D., licensed April 15th, 1840; Rev. James Y. McGinnes, licensed June 27th, 1840; Rev. Edwin Nevin, D. D.; Rev. Charles B. Maclay, licensed April 15th, 1846, ordained June 2d, 1847; Rev. Robert Hays, (Episcopalian); Rev. James L. Rogers, licensed June 13th, 1849; Rev. Wm. A. Rankin, licensed June 4th, 1850; Rev. Wm. R. Sibbett; Rev. James C. Mahon, licensed 1852; Rev. Wm. B. Craig, licensed June 13th, 1855, ordained June 17th, 1857; Rev. Geo. F. Cain, licensed Nov. 19th, 1861; and Rev. B. H. Witherow, licensed June 8th, 1864.\*

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\*Since making the above list, I have learned of seven and perhaps eight others, who have entered the ministry from this church: James Williamson,

Of these ministers, five have entered into their rest; the remaining twelve are still engaged in the service of Christ on earth. Many of them have occupied, and do occupy, places of importance and honor in the church and in the world. Many of them were and are burning and shining lights. Dr. Joseph McCarrell, I have been told, was one of the most gifted and learned men of his day. And many of you knew well the brilliant and intensely earnest James Y. McGinnes. He was a man such as God gives only at long intervals to the church and the world, and *generally* He gives them only for a little while. Like a brilliant meteor flashing across the sky, they are hardly seen till they are gone; but like the meteor, they leave behind them a train of light. *They* rest from their labors; but their *work* follows them. When we contemplate the work of these servants of God, dead and alive, who have gone forth from this church, the streams of influence which have issued hence can never be measured. They will forever continue to make glad the City of our God. If every church in our land were to send out as many into the ministry as our church has done, how soon, humanly speaking, would the world be brought to Christ! But we must not rest in what we have done. Are there not parents here to-day, who will consecrate their sons to the ministry? Are there not young men here to-day, who will say, in answer to the Master's call for laborers, "Here, Lord, am I; *send me?*"

#### BUILDINGS.

But one thing remains to be noticed, and that briefly—the houses of worship. During its history, the congregation has had three houses of worship; or more properly, perhaps, two, the present house being the second one enlarged and remodeled.

The first house of worship was what is called the "Old White

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Alex. Williamson, McKnight Williamson and Moses Williamson. These four were brothers. The two last named are still living; the first at Cambridge, Ohio, the second at Cape May City, N. J. Besides these there were Wm. Beatty, now a Baptist Minister in South Carolina; Jno. W. Pomeroy; Wm. M. Eaton, now of Springfield, Ohio; and perhaps Wm. McKinley, who was partly, at least, educated by the ladies of the church for the ministry. It is not known whether he entered the ministry or not.



Church," on the east side of South Penn street. It still stands. It is stone, plastered on the outside. This church was enlarged and repaired in Mr. Strong's time. Its dimensions as it now stands are fifty by fifty-six feet. In its day it was a plain, substantial and exceedingly comfortable place of worship. It had the usual high-backed pews; a gallery in the front, and a comparatively modern pulpit. Here our fathers and our mothers worshiped God, and sang the Psalms of David; and from this lower sanctuary they have gone up to unite in the worship and praise of the sanctuary above. In April, 1839, a few persons, originally belonging to the Associate Reformed church, having become dissatisfied for some reason, brought suit for the recovery of the building. The verdict was rendered for the defendants, represented by George McGinnis and Benjamin Reynolds, Esqs., November 22d, 1841. On the 6th of December, 1841, a writ of error was filed by the plaintiffs; and on the 1st of July, 1842, the judgment of the lower Court was reversed by the Supreme Court, and a new trial granted, *de novo*. On the 14th of November, 1842, the Supreme Court gave judgment for plaintiff, with six cents damages and six cents costs. The few persons bringing the suit tried to re-establish the Associate Reformed Church, being supplied for a time by the Rev. Alexander Sharpe, of Big Spring, but signally failed. The building was afterwards leased to the borough, for school purposes, for 99 years, for the sum of *one thousand dollars*.

The Presbyterians, being thus deprived of their house of worship, at once took active measures to procure another one. The lot where the present building now stands was purchased for \$275. And just here it might be interesting to record the fact, that the lot opposite this, where the Council House stands, was at one time deeded by the Shippens to the Presbyterian Church.

The erection of the house of worship was begun shortly after the purchase of the lot—in the fall of 1842, or spring of 1843. This was a plain, substantial brick building, 46 by 60 feet. It had no spire or cupola, the front being faced with brick, in the form of stairs or terraces, as high as the comb of the roof. Inside, there were three aisles; one in the centre, and one next each wall. It had a gallery in front opposite the pulpit; high, broad windows, with 8 by 10 glasses. It was a comfortable church-home; and here

the people worshiped God for nearly a quarter of a century. It became necessary, however, to have a larger house; so, on the 21st of May, 1866, it was unanimously resolved by the Board of Trustees to remodel and enlarge the "Old Brick Church."

Work was commenced on the present building, about the 1st of August, 1866. Twenty-two feet were added to the length of the old church, the width remaining the same, part of the old walls on each side remaining standing. The beautiful spire was erected on the front, and the neat and commodious chapel in the rear. The whole was completed in about a year from the time of commencement, at a cost of about \$20,000. We now have as neat and comfortable a house of worship as you will find any where outside of the large cities.

But we are ever to remember, that the prosperity and worth of a church does not consist in any of these temporal things, but in spiritual attainments and heavenly graces. True greatness and worth are *within*, where God sees, and not without, where man sees. May this heavenward-pointing spire, therefore, tipped as it is with gold, be emblematic of the lofty aspirations of this people, and of that better place where all of their thoughts and affections are fixed and centered! And, as the burnished pinnacle of this spire catches the first rays of the rising sun, so may every heart here be irradiated and illuminated by the life-giving rays of the Sun of Righteousness! And one prayer more: May every one who has worshiped here to-day, be permitted to worship in that upper sanctuary, that house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, where faith is swallowed up in sight, and we see the Master face to face!

#### CONCLUSION.

And now, my dear people, my task is done. What shall I say more? All that we can do, is to gather a few lessons from the past which we have traced to-day. And this must be done briefly.

1. And first, it does seem to me that this review of the past should put songs of praise in our mouths to almighty God. He has led us and our fathers before us. He has brought us to this hour. All of the rich blessings and privileges we enjoy are the gifts of His hand. "Other men have labored and we have entered



into their labors." God has permitted us to gather all of the rich fruits resulting from the toil and sacrifices of those who preceded us. We stand to-day upon the mountain-top of blessing, upon the very pinnacle of privilege. We are more highly favored in every point of view than any of those who preceded us. Shall not our gratitude be correspondingly great? Why should we "remember the days of old, the years of many generations," unless it be to see all of the way the Lord our God has led us? Let us, then, call upon our souls and upon all that is in us, to bless and magnify His Holy Name!

2. In this review of the past we see much for serious and sober reflection. The *work* of our fathers remains. Many of the monuments which they reared are still standing. The woods and the hills are almost the same as then. The streams beside which they wandered and from which they drank still flow on. By these relics which come down from the past, we are constantly reminded of them. But "our fathers, where are they?" *Gone; all gone* to that bourne from which no traveler returneth. Of all that multitude who mingled in the stirring scenes of one hundred years ago, in this place, *not one is left*. So must it be with us. One hundred years hence, and other generations and other people will stand where we do to-day. Not one who is here to-day will be here then!

"Yet a few days, and thee,  
The all-beholding sun shall see no more  
In all his course."

3. This fact should lead us to see the importance of the present, and to gird up our loins for immediate duty. How short is life! How short a time have we to perform life's work in! "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave whither thou goest." Under God, we owe the blessings we enjoy to-day to the faithfulness of those who have preceded us. They have left us a goodly heritage. What shall we leave to those who shall follow us? Every-thing depends upon what we are, and upon what we do. Great capabilities are within us; great *possibilities* are before us. We live in the grandest epoch of the world's history. Thousands have desired to see the day which we see, and have seen it not.

“ We are living, we are dwelling  
 In a grand and awful time ;  
 In an age, on ages telling,  
 To be living *is sublime.*”

Do we realize our opportunities? Shall our whole duty be done, as individuals and as citizens, to God, to ourselves, and to our posterity? If so, other generations will rise up and call us blessed ; and when another century shall have rolled away, the return of this day will be far more glorious than the one we celebrate.

May we prove faithful to the great trust committed to us ! As long as the sun and as the moon shall endure, may there be here a people to worship and serve God ! And may our beloved country, which is just entering upon the second century of its existence, fulfill its high destiny, and shine to the end of time the brightest star in the galaxy of nations !

“ Oh, Thou ! my country, may the future on  
 Thy shape majestic stand supreme, as now,  
 And every stain which mars thy starry robe,  
 In the white sun of truth, be bleached away !  
 Hold thy grand posture with unswerving mien,  
 Firm as a statue proud of its bright form,  
 Whose purity would daunt the Vandal-hand,  
 In fury raised to shatter. From thine eye  
 Let the clear light of Freedom still dispread  
 The broad, unclouded, stationary noon !  
 Still with thy right hand on the fasces lean,  
 And with the other, point the living source  
 Whence all thy glory comes, and whence, unseen,  
 But still all-seeing, the great patriot souls,  
 Whose words and wisdom left us thus enriched,  
 Look down, and note how we fulfill our trust !  
 Still hold, beneath thy fixed and sandaled foot,  
 The broken sceptre, and the tyrant's gyves ;  
 And let thy statue shine above the world—  
 A form of terror and of loveliness ! ”